

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Luck of the Irish

They've come a long way from attending school in Indiana, but these two Notre Dame graduates have found their home in Clear Lake working for the nation's space program.

Annette and Pete Hasbrook are one of many couples that share JSC as a work-site. In fact, both are part of the Flight Control Team. Annette is the group lead for the Cargo Support Engineering Group (Payloads) and Pete is the group lead for the Shuttle Environmental Systems Group (EECOM).

STS-99 was the first time in their 12 and a half years at JSC that the two have worked the same mission, in the Mission Control Center front room on the same shift, a very rare occurrence despite the number of employees who have a spouse-coworker on site. For some, working with your spouse might seem like the potential for conflict, but the Hasbrooks say their relationship is actually mutually beneficial.

“As group lead, my role involves being the networking person, so through Annette, I’ve come to know a lot of the players who work in payloads which is very helpful,” said Pete Hasbrook.

Annette Hasbrook agrees. "It helps 'grease the skids' a little. We can help avoid what might become a clash later by simply giving each other a heads up that 'hey, we've got this issue coming so you might want to have someone start working it.'"

"It helps to see the other person's perspective," added Pete Hasbrook. "We get the cross-training without having to actually cross-train."

So how did the Hasbrooks end up here together? The two met through a choral group while students at Notre Dame in the early-80s. Pete Hasbrook co-oped with IBM as an aerospace engineering student and at that point decided he wanted to make a career in the space industry. He joined JSC in the Flight



Pete, left, and Annette Hasbrook make a winning team for JSC.

Activities branch (FAO) after graduating in 1985. That same year, Annette Hasbrook used her bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering to join Andersen Consulting in the Bayou City.

Two years later, the Shuttle Program began ramping up for its newly invigorated flight schedule and Annette Hasbrook transitioned from the private sector to a civil servant position with JSC's Payload team.

Annette Hasbrook said one of the early benefits was improved communications with her husband. "Once I started working here, I understood all the acronyms he had always been throwing around," she said.

Although some people might wonder about their own ability to work with their spouse, the Hasbrooks enjoy it and don't think there is any special secret to making the situation work.

“We always try to listen to each other and appreciate what each other is going through,” said Annette Hasbrook. “Otherwise you can get caught in a death spiral.”

"We try to leave work at work," said Pete Hasbrook. With philosophy like that, maybe they don't need luck after all. ■

Relationships 101

Relationships, whether between family members, coworkers or spouses, can be one of the biggest contributors of stress. So says Jackie Reese, MA, LPC, director of JSC's Employee Assistance Program and Gail Howell, ACSW, LMSW-ACP, EAP counselor.

With a population of 13,000, JSC can seem like its own little world at times and can result in many relationship dynamics that can produce added stress in the workplace. Not only is JSC host to many married or dating employees, but there are also many family members, some spanning generations, that are represented in the NASA program.

“Sometimes employees can feel an added sense of pressure when they have family members who also work here, who maybe have done some pretty historic and extraordinary things,” said Reese. “They can leave pretty big shoes to fill.”

Generally speaking, the caliber of people attracted to the space program

makes for interesting challenges when it comes to relationships. Most employees here are very committed to their work, highly educated and very ambitious.

"They are very skilled and motivated," said Reese. "They experience so much passion toward their work and get so much satisfaction from it that they sometimes don't see the need to make time for their relationships outside of work."

Howell agrees and says that sometimes that commitment to the space program is often what bonds so many couples.

"They have a common ground with each other," said Howell. "Where else can they find so many other brilliant, ambitious individuals with similar interests? They have a unique understanding for what the other person is going through."

“Relationships at the workplace CAN work,” Reese and Howell agree, “but you have to know and respect the rules.”

The Employee Assistance

Program is available for all JSC employees and contractors and their dependents. For more information on this confidential service call x36130. ■ *off*

For couples who work together, Reese and Howell offer the following suggestions to minimize relationship-related stress.

- **Keep your roles clear.**

“You can’t be a spouse at work, and don’t be ‘at work’ when you’re with your spouse,” said Reese. “Respect those boundaries. That can be tricky, especially for couples who work closely and might be tempted to cross the line.”

- **Communicate.**

“Be willing to listen and talk about your feelings,” said Howell. “Validate each other’s feelings and respect the other person’s perspective, even if you don’t always agree.”

- **Don't isolate yourselves.**

“Have your spouse be a part of your support system but not your only supporter,” said Reese. “It’s important to find the right balance. Go out to lunch with coworkers or colleagues to maintain those relationships as well.”

- **Find the time.**

“At JSC, no one thinks twice about working a 50- or 60-hour week, but you have to make sure you find the time for your relationship,” said Howell. “You can’t maintain a quality relationship without dedicating some time and energy to it.”